

KGB made up CIA-Kennedy slaying link, book says

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WASHINGTON — The Soviet KGB fabricated evidence linking the CIA to the assassination of President John F. Kennedy and passed

the material to unwitting conspiracy theorists in the United States, according to a new book based on KGB files brought to the West by a defector.

According to the files turned over by a former KGB archivist to Brit-

ish intelligence and detailed in a new book, Moscow's Cold War spy service took several steps designed to link the CIA to the Kennedy assassination.

These steps included forging a letter from Lee Harvey Oswald to a CIA officer, E. Howard Hunt, asking for information "before any steps are taken by me or anyone else," according to the new book.

The book is to be published by Basic Books later this month. The Oswald letter was supposed to have been written about two weeks before Kennedy was gunned down in Dallas on Nov. 22, 1963, but was actually created by the KGB in the mid-1970s, after Hunt's name had surfaced in the Watergate investigation, according to KGB files copied by Mitrokhin while he served as a KGB archivist.

The letter was then passed anonymously to three conspiracy buffs and entered circulation in the United States when it was picked up by one writer of self-published assassination books, the authors report.

The letter led to a brief flurry of interest when a Dallas newspaper reported that a handwriting expert declared it to be genuine, but a congressional panel that re-investigated the Kennedy assassination in the late 1970s later concluded that the letter was probably a forgery.

The KGB's clumsy propaganda campaign never had much of an impact on the debate over the Kennedy assassination in the United States. But the archives spirited out of Russia by Mitrokhin appear to support the longstanding assertions by CIA officials that the KGB conducted disinformation campaigns designed to raise dark suspicions about the U.S. government and prominent American leaders around the world.